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# *Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International*

The **Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International** (FGBMFI) is a fellowship of lay businessmen. Its main purpose is to bring interest to the

Christian gospel. Theologically, the organization has its roots in Pentecostalism.<sup>[1]</sup> The headquarters is in Irvine, California, US.

## **Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International (FGBMFI)**

**Founded** 1951

**Founder** Demos Shakarian

**Type** Christian Interdenominational

**Location** Irvine, California, US

**Area served** World

**President** Richard Shakarian

**Website** [fgbmfi.org](http://fgbmfi.org)

# History

FGBMFI was founded in 1951 in Los Angeles by Demos Shakarian, a California rancher.<sup>[1]</sup> Following a difficult start (for a year nothing happened to the original group that met weekly), then a donation of \$1000 was given to start a small publication titled Full Gospel Business Men's VOICE, it grew steadily, the second chapter was in Phoenix, Arizona, and after a few years chapters were set up throughout the world.<sup>[2]</sup> In 1972, the membership is 300,000. <sup>[3]</sup> In 1988, there are 3,000

chapters in 90 countries. <sup>[4]</sup>

After Demos Shakarian died in 1993, his son Richard Shakarian assumed the organization's leadership. <sup>[5]</sup> The legitimacy of Richard's claim to leadership was disputed by some directors of the FGBMFI leadership, despite the mentoring he had received by Demos Shakarian before his death. There had been previous leadership disputes in FGBMFI's history.

One of those early groups that split encouraged other Chapters to leave

and formed "IFCB". After Demos' death, several FGBMFI leaders who objected to Richard's leadership seceded and formed Business Mens Fellowship (BMF), which received its first financial contribution (\$1,000) from Rose Shakarian, Demos Shakarian's widow. BMF was initially led by an attorney, who sued Richard. Steve Shakarian, Demos' son, later became one of the directors of BMF. In the mid-1990s, some major FGBMFI National Offices in Asia, namely Singapore and Hong Kong, withdrew from FGBMFI and allied themselves with the BMF.

Despite these successes, in the mid-2000s, there was another leadership split. Instead of starting a new organization with a different name (as both IFCB and BMF had done), the new group named itself "Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship in America", or "FGBMFA", borrowing heavily from the FGBMFI's official history in marketing. In the UK, the elected leadership agreed to dissociate from the international office of FGBMFI and later adopted the name of Full Gospel Businessmen (FGB ). FGB UK & Ireland is associated with a growing network

of FGB, FGBMFI and BMF national organisations through the Full Gospel Global Forum .

## Geographical spread

FGBMFI is active in several countries.

As of 1995, it has local chapters in some 140 countries and has tens of thousands of members. The gospel is preached to millions of people

annually.<sup>[1]</sup> In some countries, it uses a version of its name translated in the local language. In Germany, e.g., Christen im Beruf (“Christians in

professional life”), in Finland *Suomen Täyden Evankeliumin Liikemiesten Kansainvälinen Veljesliitto* (STELK),<sup>[1]</sup> in several Spanish-speaking countries *Fraternidad Internacional de Hombres de Negocio del Evangelio Completo* (FIHNEC), in Poland *Miedzynarodowa Spolecznosc Biznesmenow Pelnej Ewangelii - Chrzescijanie w Biznesie*.

## Similar organizations

FGBMFI should not be confused with Christian Business Men's Committee (CBMC) and International Christian



Chamber of Commerce (ICCC). CBMC, which was founded before the 2nd World War, has a broader theological background. ICCC was founded by FGBMFI members in Sweden, but it has a different purpose. Simultaneous membership of two or more of these organisations is generally not considered a problem.

There is some resemblance with Aglow. The latter, however, which is a fellowship of evangelical women, puts more emphasis on spiritual growth, while FGBMFI primarily focuses on

spreading the gospel.

## Literature

- Demos Shakarian, John & Elisabeth Sherrill: *The Happiest People on Earth*. Old Tappan, N.J.: Chosen Books: distributed by F. H. Revell Co., c1975. ISBN 0-912376-14-7. 187 pages.
- Val Fotherby: *The awakening giant*. London (UK) (Marshall Pickering), 2000. ISBN 0-551-03234-0. 200 pages.

See also

- Gideons International

## External links

- Official website
- Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International Collection,  
Southern Folklife Collection,  
University of North Carolina at  
Chapel Hill

## Bibliography

- "FGBMFI: Facing Frustrations and the Future", by B. Bird. *Charisma* (June 1986)
- "FGBMFI Struggles toward the

Future", by D. Shakarian(?). *Charisma* (March 1988)

- *All Things Are Possible*, by D. E. Harrell Jr., 1975
- *How to live like a King's Kid*, by H. Hill. Logos International, 1974. ISBN 0-88270-083-9.
- "Full Gospel Business Men's Fellowship International" by J. R. Zeigler; pp. 653–54 in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, revised and expanded edition, ed. Stanley M. Burgess,

associate editor Eduard M. Van der Maas. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 2002)

## References

1. *Heino, Harri (1997). Mihin Suomi tänään uskoo [What does Finland believe in today] (in Finnish) (2nd ed.). Helsinki: WSOY. pp. 115–116. ISBN 951-0-27265-5.*

2. *The Happiest People on Earth, the story of Demos Shakarian as told to John and Elizabeth Sherrill, Steward Press, Chappaqua, New York, 10514, 1975*

3. *Randall Herbert Balmer, Encyclopedia of Evangelicalism, Westminster John Knox Press, USA, 2002, page 274*

4. *Robert H. Krapohl, Charles H. Lippy, The Evangelicals: A Historical, Thematic, and Biographical Guide, Greenwood Publishing Group, USA, 1999, page 74*

5. *Allan Anderson, An Introduction to Pentecostalism: Global Charismatic Christianity, Cambridge University Press, UK, 2013, page 160*

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